

Message Text

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TAGS: EINV, RO, EEWT

SUBJ: GOR-ISLAND CREEK JOINT VENTURE: ROMANIAN DEPENDENCE ON
USSR FOR COKING COAL

REF: BUCHAREST 3979

1. SUMMARY - FOR PAST TWO YEARS ROMANIA HAS BEEN LEADING
IMPORTER OF SOVIET COKE, TAKING NEARLY ONE-FOURTH OF ALL
SOVIET EXPORTS IN 1974. HOWEVER, SOVIET SUPPLY SITUATION IS
TIGHT DUE TO STEADY RISE IN INTERNAL REQUIREMENTS, AND TOTAL
EXPORTS DECLINED SLIGHTLY IN 1974 FROM 1973. EAST EUROPEAN
EXPORT AVAILABILITIES ARE REPORTEDLY LIMITED. CONSEQUENTLY,
EMBASSY BELIEVES IT WOULD BE RELATIVELY EASY FOR USSR AND OTHER
CEMA COUNTRIES TO REFUSE ROMANIAN REQUESTS FOR MORE COKE

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TO OPERATE AN EXPANDED IRON AND STEEL INDUSTRY. SOVIETS COULD

ALSO DEMAND THAT ROMANIANS RESTRICT COKE IMPORTS IN CONFORM-
ITY WITH SOME TYPE OF ALLOCATION SYSTEM WITHIN FRAMEWORK
OF CEMA INTEGRATION PROGRAM. END SUMMARY.

2. EMBASSY SUBMITS FOLLOWING AS SUPPORT FOR EMBASSY
BUCHAREST'S COMMENTS ON GOR-ISLAND CREEK JOINT VENTURE,
PARTICULARLY IN REGARD TO PARA 2(D) OF REFTEL AND WHAT
WE REGARD AS IMPORTANT AND SENSITIVE ISSUE OF POTENTIAL
ROMANIAN VULNERABILITY TO SOVIET/CEMA PRESSURE ON SUPPLY
OF COKING COAL.

3. USSR FOREIGN TRADE STATISTICS FOR 1973 AND 1974 SHOW
ROMANIA AS LARGEST IMPORTER OF SOVIET COKE, TAKING
NEARLY 25 PERCENT OF TOTAL EXPORTS LAST YEAR. OFFICIAL
STATISTICS FOLLOW:

SOVIET EXPORTS OF COKING COAL (THOUSANDS OF TONS)

COUNTRY	1973	1974
ROMANIA	1,332	1,175
GDR	1,077	1,036
HUNGARY	638	656
FINLAND	603	597
BULGARIA	294	294
SWEDEN	225	170
NORTH KOREA	122	106
TOTAL	4,291	4,034

NO STATISTICS ARE GIVEN FOR WASHED COKING COAL, ALTHOUGH
THIS MAY BE INCLUDED IN CATEGORY FOR HARD COAL AND
ANTHRACITE WHICH SHOW ROMANIAN IMPORTS FOR 1973 AND 1974
RESPECTIVELY AS 650 AND 514 THOUSAND TONS, RANKING
ABOUT TENTH.

4. SOVIET DOMESTIC DEMAND FOR COKING COAL IS STEADILY
RISING AND IT IS ALSO OUR UNDERSTANDING, AS EMBASSY
BUCHAREST SUGGESTS, THAT EXPORT POSSIBILITIES IN
EASTERN EUROPE, INCLUDING CZECHOSLOVAKIA AND POLAND,
ARE LIMITED AND MAY NOT KEEP PACE WITH ROMANIAN REQUIRE-
MENTS. WE NOTE, INCIDENTALLY, THAT ONLY RECIPEINT OF
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SOVIET COKE NOT ASSOCIATED WITH CEMA IS SWEDEN, WHICH
INDICATES THAT THIS IS RARE COMMODITY ALLOCATED ALMOST
COMPLETELY TO "FRATERNAL SOCIALIST CONTRIES." IT IS
ALSO SIGNIFICANT THAT EXPORTS IN 1974 DECREASED SLIGHTLY
FROM 1973 LEVEL, FURTHER CONFIRMEING TIGHT SOVIET SUPPLY
SITUATION.

5. GIVEN THE ABOVE, IT WOULD BE RELATIVELY EASY FOR

SOVIETS AT ANY TIME OVER NEXT SEVERAL YEARS TO PLEAD
INABILITY TO MEET INCREASED ROMANIAN DEMANDS OR TO
INSIST ON SOME FORM OF RATIONING FO EXPORTS IN ACCORDANCE
WITH THEIR (AND CEMA SECRETARIAT'S) VIEW OF WHAT IS
CORRECT FOR CEMA INTEGRATION. IN SUM, ROMANIAN FUTURE
POSITION, ESPECIALLY IF, AS EMBASSY BUCHAREST NOTES,
REQUIREMENTS INCREASE SUBSTANTIALLY, SEEMS VERY
VULNERABLE INDEED.
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